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## House of Representatives

### STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN ED CASE OF HAWAII TUESDAY MAY 3, 2005

#### ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud member of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus so ably led by the gentleman from California (Mr. *Honda*) to join my colleagues in commemorating our Asian Pacific American community at the outset of APA Heritage Month.

And I do so with deep respect, great pride, humble appreciation and eager anticipation. Respect, for the great challenges generations of Asians and Pacific Americans have faced in our country and overcome and still face and will overcome. Pride, for the profound role my own Hawaii, has played in the nurturance and maturation of our APA communities throughout our country. Appreciation, for the rich tapestry APAs have woven in the fabric of our national identity. And anticipation, for what certainly lies ahead for our APA communities in writing the next great chapters in the ongoing narrative of this great country.

Mr. Speaker, nowhere in our country is the story of Americans of Asian and Pacific Island descent better illustrated than my own Hawaii, where well over 50 percent of our population is Asian and Pacific American, where our Asian and Pacific American community has achieved the pinnacle of success in all facets of local, statewide, national and international life, and where a majority of all marriages and a majority of all children share

more now than one ethnicity, more likely than not an ethnicity of the Asian and Pacific Americans.

And the story of APAs in Hawaii is a rich and compelling story which acts as a microcosm of the story of our very country. Of course, it started millennia ago when the ancestors of our indigenous peoples, the native Hawaiians, came to Hawaii from their ancestral homelands to the south, joining other indigenous peoples in the U.S. mainland and Alaska in the original settlement of our country. And it continued in the last 200 years with the great migrations from Japan and China. And in the last 100-plus years, with still further great migrations from Korea and the Philippines. And then in the last half century from the Pacific islands such as Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and Guam. And amazingly it continues since to this day, in the last quarter century, from Vietnam and Cambodia and Laos and the other nations of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. And throughout, of course, many, many other immigrants from other Asian and Pacific countries, India and Pakistan and Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Thailand and Indonesia and Malaysia and much more.

So when we pause to honor the rich and diverse heritage of our APA communities, we honor the capital of the APA world, my Hawaii, a beacon to the world of what can be.

Yet what is throughout our country is not where it can and should be, for there remain challenges aplenty. There is always the specter of racism and discrimination. Yes, less than there was, less overt, less on the surface than it has been, but insidious enough and there enough to flare up with very little warning, a specter against which constant vigilance is required.

And there are still unique challenges in economic and social advancement for the APA community and unique conditions to be addressed in health care and education and other areas. And there are still goals of fundamental fairness to be accomplished with many of our APA communities, most notably, in my case, Federal recognition for our native Hawaiians.

But while we must remember tonight these challenges and what we must do, we also remember all that is good and great in our APA community. Let me give you just one great example, because we remember tonight that hard on us is the centennial of sustained immigration from the Philippines to our country, the 1906 exodus from the mother country to the sugar plantations of Hawaii, an exodus that accelerated in 1946 and on and now has yielded fully 2.4 million citizens of our country of Philippine descent.

Yes, it will be a great year for the Filipino community of celebration, with barrio fiestas and song and dance and remembrances of the pioneers and those who succeeded on their broad shoulders. But in many ways, what we celebrate tonight is the recognition that for the Filipino-American community, the celebration of their centennial will be a celebration in miniature of the Asian and Pacific American experience in our country, for the story of our APA community is the story of our America, from its earliest beginnings to its latest arrivals, a story still un-

folding as, for example, is happening right on the floor of this U.S. House of Representatives, with my congressional page appointment, Awapuhi Dancil of Makawao, Maui, a junior at Kamehameha Schools and undoubtedly, no doubt about it, a leader in the making for the APA community and for our country in the future.

And so this is a story worth telling over and over again as we do here again tonight.

Mahalo and aloha.